



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 23, 2017

**Contacts:**

Mary Byrd, Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, 805-961-8833

Sean Hastings, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, 805-705-1790

Mike Villegas, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, 805-645-1440

Shannon Yee, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, 202-870-0387

**Ten companies slowed ships in Santa Barbara Channel region 2016 program to protect blue whales and blue skies**

**Program cuts over 27 tons of smog-forming emissions**

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — The partners in an initiative to cut air pollution and protect whales announced results from the 2016 voluntary incentive program and publicly recognized the ten shipping companies who participated, reducing speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region to 12 knots or less. The program started July 1 and ended November 15, 2016. The recognition ceremony took place at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting in Santa Barbara, CA.

Automatic Identification System (AIS) data for ship speeds in the program verified that more than 80 percent of the enrolled transits were successful in reducing speeds to 12 knots or less, and transits were successful in achieving an additional bonus incentive for slowing to 10 knots or less. The program reduced more than 27 tons of emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a smog-forming air pollutant, and more than 1,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases.

Ships account for more than 50 percent of NOx emissions in Santa Barbara County and for more than 25 percent of NOx emissions in Ventura County. Ship strikes are also a major threat to recovering endangered and threatened whale populations, including blue, humpback, and fin whales. Slowing ship speeds reduces air pollution and has been shown to reduce the risk of fatal strikes on whales.

The following shipping companies participated in the 2016 vessel speed reduction incentive program: CMA CGM, Evergreen, Hamburg Sud, Hapag Lloyd, Holland, K Line, Maersk, MOL, NYK Line, and Yang Ming. The program is a collaborative effort by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and Volgenau Foundation.

"The 2016 vessel speed reduction program was an overwhelming success, demonstrating the real potential of this kind of program to both improve air quality and reduce mortality from ship strikes. We applaud the collaboration of the shipping industry and our VSR partners" said Chris Mobley, superintendent of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

"With two of the busiest ports in the world, thousands of vessels travel through the Santa Barbara Channel and the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary. These vessels pose collision threats to large whales," said Kris Sarri, President and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. "The

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is proud to partner with stakeholders to support projects to reduce injuries and death to these magnificent species, improve air quality, and maintain important maritime commerce that supports our economy. “

The incentives for the 2016 program targeted historically faster transits to achieve the most significant air emission and whale conservation benefits from the reduced speeds. Incentives ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,500 depending on historical speeds in the program area. Additional incentives up to \$1,250 were available for ships that slow to 10 knots or less; submit detailed whale sightings reports; and demonstrate that schedules were adjusted so that the ships did not need to speed up elsewhere along the route.

Response to this variable incentive scale has been positive, with most companies electing to opt in on these additional voluntary measures and some choosing to even go beyond what they're being asked to do. One example is K Line, whose captains and crew have regularly provided photos and annotated maps of all whale sightings along with the requested whale sightings report. In addition, more than 90 percent of the companies whose ships traverse the California coast indicated interest in participating in a Bay Area program in the future if one is offered.

Highlights of the 2016 program as compared with the 2014 program included the following:

- The 2016 Program provided financial incentives for 50 slow speed transits, nearly double the 27 transits incentivized in 2014;
- 10 shipping lines participated in 2016, seven shipping lines participated in the 2014;
- The 2016 program received applications for 367 transits; the 2014 program received 89 applications.
- The 2016 program more than doubled the emission reductions as compared with the 2014 program.
- Many ship crews provided whale sightings information during their transits

“Since the shipping industry is regulated by national and international organizations, the only way for us as a local agency to address shipping emissions in our region is through innovative strategies,” said Mike Villegas, director of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. “The level of participation is very encouraging and demonstrates a sustained program would have a significant impact on air quality.”

“It's clear that we are achieving immediate emission-reduction benefits,” said Aeron Arlin Genet, Director of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. “We look forward to continuing to collaborate to pursue funding and strategies to expand the program further.”

The partners are working on identifying funding sources for a 2017 VSR incentive program, expected to start June 1, 2017.

For more information, visit <http://www.ourair.org/air-pollution-marine-shipping>.

The **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation** is the chief national not-for-profit partner for marine and Great Lakes sanctuaries. The Foundation works to conserve these unique areas through research and conservation, education, citizen science, outreach and community engagement. The Foundation is also a respected advocate for ocean stewardship nationally and worldwide. Learn more at: [marinesanctuary.org](http://marinesanctuary.org).

**NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary** was designated in 1980 to protect marine resources surrounding San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands. The sanctuary spans approximately 1,470 square miles, extending from island shorelines to six miles

offshore, and encompasses a rich diversity of marine life, habitats and historical and cultural resources. Learn more at [www.channelislands.noaa.gov/](http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/).

**The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District** is a local government agency that works to protect the people and the environment of Santa Barbara County from the effects of air pollution. Learn more at [www.OurAir.org](http://www.OurAir.org).

**The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District** is the local government agency in Ventura County that protects public health and agriculture from the adverse effects of air pollution by identifying air pollution problems and developing a comprehensive program to achieve and maintain state and federal air quality standards. Learn more at [www.vcapcd.org](http://www.vcapcd.org).

The **Volgenau Foundation** protects our planet and serves our society by supporting programs that conserve natural resources, educate children, and promote classical music. For more information, see [www.volgenaufoundation.org](http://www.volgenaufoundation.org).